



42nd Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 10: General Debate on technical assistance and capacity-building

Oral Statement Delivered by Rosanna Ocampo
On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Thursday, 26 September 2019

Mr President,

FORUM-ASIA welcomes the report on the OHCHR in Cambodia.

We welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation for the government and political actors to engage in dialogue and allow open public debate with respect for fundamental rights in order to reduce political tensions. However, we are concerned that the government has demonstrated no willingness to do so. This month, the government announced that anyone expressing support for the return of exiled leaders of the dissolved opposition party will be detained.

We echo the Secretary-General's recommendation calling for the broadening of civil society space, including by reviewing restrictive legislation and regulations. Despite pledges of legislative reform to ease restrictions on civic and democratic space, there has been no meaningful progress in this regard. Restrictions imposed by existing legislation such as the LANGO, Trade Union Law, Political Parties Law, and Telecommunications Law remain, while the government's plans to introduce cybercrime and press freedom legislation raise fears of further curtailment of freedom of expression and media. Cambodia must ensure that such legislation are in line with its international obligations.

We call on the Council to mandate additional monitoring and reporting by the OHCHR on civic and democratic space in the country, and recommend concrete steps the Government of Cambodia must take in order to ensure the restoration of fundamental freedoms and the end of the political crisis.

Cambodia has been on the agenda of the UN since 1993. However, in spite of the ongoing technical assistance, the Government of Cambodia has shown that it is clearly unwilling to improve the human rights situation. In order to prevent the worsening of the crisis, the Council needs to strengthen its approach to Cambodia as a situation that requires the Council's attention.

Thank you.